OBITUARIES

RICHARD DUNCAN BERESFORD-JONES (1903–2000)

Richard Duncan Beresford-Jones died on 25 August 2000 at the age of ninety seven. Born in Wolverhampton, he went to Harrow and Oxford before joining the family steel business in the 1930s. An accountant by profession, he latterly lived at Castle Hedingham in Essex. He had a long interest in a variety of antiquarian studies including oriental antiquities, especially Japanese metalwork, and, of course, numismatics. Although he sold most of his coin collections in the 1980s and early 1990s, he retained an interest in numismatics and continued to be a member of our Society. In his later years he developed interests in water-colour painting and in the study and writing of poetry, even to the extent of learning Russian so as to be able to read poetry in that tongue.

Beresford-Jones is one of a select band who have made substantial and lasting contributions to the study of both British and French numismatics. He was elected to membership of the British Numismatic Society in 1953 and served as a member of Council from 1955 to 1959. His particular interests extended from the later middle ages to the seventeenth century and, in particular, he was attracted to the beautiful and well-executed gold coins of those periods. He formed a splendid collection of choice specimens of these, the English part of which was sold by public auction by Spink and Son Ltd in 1983, and the Scottish by the same firm in 1995. He was also interested in the productions of the Oxford mint under Charles I during the Civil War and, as well as forming a collection of the gold struck there, he assembled an important group of the silver half-crowns of that mint, also sold by Spink in 1995. The French, or more strictly the Anglo-Gallic, part was sold by private treaty to the late Herbert Schneider in the late 1980s.

It is Duncan Beresford-Jones’s published works, however, which form an enduring record of his perceptive and sound numismatic judgement. The first of these was his study of the huge three pound pieces struck in Oxford by Charles I during the Civil War entitled ‘The Oxford Mint and the Triple Unites of Charles I’ published in the British Numismatic Journal, vol. 27 (1954). This was followed by a study of the smaller gold denominations, ‘The Oxford Mint, 1642–6: Unites and Half-unites’, also published in the Journal, vol. 28 (1957). These works are still the standard references for the series that they cover and are constantly referred to by all who work on them.

He also studied the gold Anglo-Gallic coinage, that is to say the coins struck in the name of English princes in France during the time when they were lords, dukes or princes of Aquitaine and during the period following the battle of Agincourt (1415) when they became, first heirs, then, for over thirty years, de facto, kings of, at least, part of France. The fruit of these studies was a book, A Manual of Anglo-Gallic Gold Coins, published by Spink in 1964, followed by an article in the British Numismatic Journal entitled ‘The Salutes of Henry VI’ in vol. 43 (1973) and a further note in the same journal in 1978 entitled ‘Additions to the Anglo-Gallic Gold Series’. Once again his work was sound and lasting and is still referred to even though it has been to some extent succeeded by Elias’s great work in the same field that also covered the silver and billon coinages.

We can remember Duncan Beresford-Jones as a member of our Society who in a long and productive life made lasting contributions to the study of British Numismatics.

PETER WOODHEAD

MRS GLADYS MARGARET DELMÉ-RADCLIFFE (1913–2000)

With the death of Peggy Delmé-Radcliffe (as she was universally known) in May 2000 at the age of eighty seven, the Society has lost one of the few serious lady collectors amongst its membership. From 1970, when she was first elected, she took an active interest in the affairs of the Society for more than fifteen years. During this time she served on Council and, for five years from 1974, as one of the Journal’s editorial team. She was responsible for the practical side of producing the volumes, a task that she carried out with her customary efficiency and good nature.
Gladys Margaret Nugent was the daughter of a colonial civil servant, based in the West Indies. Peggy spent much of her early and middle life abroad. Her husband Peter, a member of the Delmé-Radclyffe family that had lived at Hitchin Priory in Hertfordshire for many generations, was a tin miner. He worked extensively in Africa and Asia and during many years spent in Malaysia became the senior figure there in this field. As well as learning to speak fluent Malay, Peggy at various stages in her life took up all kinds of activity with typical enthusiasm – from golf and dancing to painting and playing the accordion. In later years after they had returned to England, she practised healing with her hands, and her reputation was such that sufferers with back pain would come from all over the country for her help that was, in both senses, freely given.

The Delmé-Radclyffes settled in the village of Aldbourne, near Marlborough, in Wiltshire. At the local newsagent she would examine the change in the till for rare dates, and mentioning this to Christopher Blunt, who lived only a few miles away at Ramsbury, she was encouraged by him to take an interest in English medieval coins. Under his guidance she began to collect silver coins of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, specializing in the reign of Edward IV, on which Blunt had himself been co-author of the standard monograph. The sale catalogue of her collection, which was dispersed by Glendining’s on 17 April 1985, was expertly prepared by Mr Peter Mitchell of Baldwin’s, and is a basic work of reference. Its usefulness is enhanced by the set of study photographs made of her coins of Edward IV, which at 470 numbered more than those of this reign in the Lockett collection. Many were collected in the first few years from 1969 to 1975. They included extensive runs of the commoner coins as well as many of the important rarities, and were gathered from many sources, small dealers and coin fairs as well as auction sales and the leading London dealers. Although she published little – on the escallop mark on York pence of Richard II in the British Numismatic Journal, vol. 48 (1978), the English groats from the Innerwick Hoard, vol. 52 (1982) and some unpublished varieties of Edward IV, vol. 41 (1972) – Peggy had a very good knowledge of the coins of her chosen period which was reflected in the thoroughness of her collection and her careful description of individual items in it.

After English coins, she turned her attention to Kushan and Gupta gold, and these were also sold in the eighties (Glendining’s, 2 February 1983 and 5 September 1984). But in later years she was less seen in numismatic circles: with the infirmities of age she resorted to a motor wheelchair, which she used to call her chariot. Peggy Delmé-Radclyffe was a delightful and indomitable lady of the old school, outgoing but modest, and warmly regarded by all who knew her.

Stewartby

Patrick Finn (1942–2000)

Patrick Finn collapsed on Easter Sunday, 23 April 2000, having just supervised the London view of his sale of Irish coins to be held in Dublin the following Saturday, 29 April. He was diagnosed with a deep brain tumour and died six months later on Friday, 21 October, having, but for a day or two, never left hospital.

Our relationship could be said to have begun before we ever met. After the sudden death of Albert Baldwin in November 1967, in early 1968 I attended a meeting of the committee negotiating with the government over the 1966 gold coin legislation. We met in Spink’s boardroom on the top floor: present were representatives of the three leading dealers and three leading auctioneers, with Patrick Neill, QC, in the chair. After the meeting Douglas Liddell invited me to stay behind for a chat, the forceful introductory remark being ‘We stick together’. Who was I to argue? From the beginning Douglas, a contemporary of my late cousin Albert, was very kind to me.

Patrick had joined Spink from the British Museum in 1965, but I have no recollection of when we first met. Douglas Liddell was often abroad and handled the gold coins, so I don’t doubt we were soon in contact and fast became friends. He came to my 40th birthday party in October 1973, and I once went to his home in Boxgrove, Guildford, and met Frank Brady, a brother of the owner of the sale of Irish coins in Dublin.

We soon liaised over all manner of things – bad debts, slow payers, light-fingered gentlemen and other mutual problems. We quickly built up trust in each other that, over the years, became
virtually total. It was sometimes commercially and politically advantageous to know each other’s secrets, to know what was going on in the market place, if only to keep London in the forefront of numismatic business. It was all right for me, for I was answerable to no one, but Patrick had superiors and it could have been embarrassing for him had they learned of what I knew of their activities.

At one time we had regular suppers together. He, very conveniently, was then living by Parsons Green station, twenty minutes away on a District Line train, a shower and change, a drink, Linda perhaps joining us, and off to a restaurant nearby, of which there were many. Doubtless over one such supper we agreed a takeover of Glendining’s as both companies had a large investment in the firm, and no successor to Mr French had been groomed. Lunch was arranged with Douglas Liddell, later with DGL and Mr. French, the next to be with Christopher Weston of Phillips, owners of Glendining’s. In the event it was not to be, for the ship owners Andrew Weir bought Spink, and Spink started their own auctions.

We did much business together but I cannot remember a major disagreement, nor can I ever remember writing to him or even putting anything down on paper. So much so that we each encouraged our staff to deal through ourselves, certainly initially. Rather as one used to do with Mr French, following in the steps of Albert Baldwin, we would ring each other early in the day, soon after 8 o’clock, and in a few seconds sort out any problems that might occur. I well remember one early-morning call from Patrick. It would have been 23 June 1976, the morning after a Society meeting, at which Elmore Jones on my behalf had exhibited a coin I had bought earlier that month at a Spink/Glendining’s sale, a Confessor late transitional type (BMC XIV, North 835), catalogued as Worcester, but actually Droitwich. He complained bitterly that I should have put him right and saved him the embarrassment of a ticking-off from Douglas Liddell, but I explained that I had given him the answer in my catalogue of the Elmore Jones collection (lot 900), and if he could not be bothered to read it, not to blame me. Anyhow, the moneyer Godric was not given in North for Worcester. Q.E.D.

It was a disappointment, but in no way surprising, that Patrick resigned from Spink on Christie’s takeover in 1993. He was still quite active in London, and for a short time was a director of Baldwin’s Auctions Ltd., but I was able to see him in Cumbria as we had a holiday cottage in Loweswater. The last time he and Linda came to supper turned out to be a very jolly occasion. Unbeknown to Patrick, Sandy Campbell (elected 1966) and his wife Helen were staying with us and, as it happened, Surrey neighbours, en route from Edinburgh to Preston, dropped in, stayed to supper (Armenian lamb) and so had to stay the night. A good time was had by all eight of us.

I saw Patrick in Preston hospital ten days after his collapse, awaiting the result of his biopsy. On subsequent trips to Cumbria Linda assured me Patrick would find any visit too upsetting, and I only saw him again in late September. I came away very depressed, certain that I would not see him again.

On 3 October a requiem mass (in Latin) was held at the London Oratory, attended by many, but many others, such as Douglas Liddell, were unable to make the journey and pay their last respects. He will be greatly missed.

PETER MITCHELL

PROFESSOR JEFFREY MASS (29.6.1940–30.3.2001)

Jeffrey Mass was Ichihashi Professor of Japanese History and Civilisation at Stanford University and first came to England in the summer of 1984 to teach for the term at St Antony’s College, Oxford. He acquired some inexpensive late Anglo-Saxon coins but tired of them and wanted to move on. I thought I should get to know him better and find out what his thoughts were, so I invited him to lunch. This was to be the first of many and the beginning of what was to be a close friendship which spanned the Atlantic Ocean and nearly a third of our lives. He decided to collect coins of the Short Cross series. I asked him why and he replied that they were contemporary to the period of Japanese history he studied and taught, which I thought made sense. Thus began the Mass incursion into the series, which was to prove highly significant: he was a very determined
collector. He was elected a member of the Society in October 1984 and in 1993 read a paper on the early issues, of which he had made an extensive study. This was delivered with all the skills of a practiced lecturer. The paper was published in the Society’s Journal for that year and remains a standard work. Soon after its publication I found two coins he had not recorded. It was a source of banter and amusement between us but, of course, I would not have known them new without his paper.

By this time Jeffrey had moved from St Antony’s to Hertford College and had bought a house in Islip, Oxford, with the collection at the Ashmolean Museum and the scholarship of Michael Metcalf and Nicholas Mayhew, was well established on the numismatic map but Jeffrey was perhaps to make it the more so. He persuaded Hertford College to host several congresses of the British Association of Numismatic Societies which were well attended and much enjoyed. Jeffrey’s room in the garret, as I referred to it, overlooked the dreaming spires and the college was conveniently close to the finest and probably oldest hostelry in the City. Many an extra-curricular debate would take place there. Jeffrey made many friends in the numismatic world here in England and also found friendship with Doctor William ‘Bill’ Conte who was a near neighbour. It amused the three of us that it was I who put them in touch from my desk in London.

Jeffrey’s numismatic studies and collection continued to progress and he amassed an in-depth representation which exceeded that of any previous numismatist. A considerable number of his acquisitions were of notable pedigree but the provenance he most cherished was that of an important Ia of Northampton (F.E.J. 1479) which was a birthday gift from his daughter, Tara. His collection will shortly be published as a sylloge volume, a rare achievement by a private collector and independent scholar. It is sad that he did not live to see a copy of it but he had the satisfaction of knowing that his work was complete. A monumental publication in both senses of the word, it will be a necessary handbook for all interested in Short Cross.

Jeffrey collected until the very last and died on 30th March following a short illness which he bore with great fortitude. Shortly before his death he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Hertford College, a particular honour for a visiting foreign professor. Jeffrey wrote more books on Japanese mediaeval history than any other westerner but it is as an authority on Short Cross that he will be remembered in numismatic circles.

MICHAEL SHARP

NOËL WOOLF (24.12.1911–28.5.2001)

Noël Woolf will long be remembered for his substantial contributions to Jacobite numismatics, an area of study largely neglected since the death of Helen Farquhar. His authoritative work ‘The Sovereign Remedy: Touch-pieces and the King’s Evil’ was published in the Journal in two parts (Vol. 49, pp. 99–121, Pls XIX–XXII and Vol. 50, pp. 91–16, Pls II–IV), followed by a supplement (Vol. 55, p. 195) and later as a B.A.N.S. publication (Doris Stockwell Memorial Papers No. 4, 1990. In 1981 he read a paper entitled ‘The Medals of the Children of George II and James III’, the contents of which were incorporated in his other major work ‘The Record of the Jacobite Movement’ (Spink and Son Ltd, 1988).

I knew Noël well and found him quiet, modest and very friendly. With his wife, Freya, he attended several B.A.N.S. congresses where they made many friends. Noël was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and member of The Royal Stuart Society, The 1745 Association and the Worthing Numismatic Society, being a former Chairman of the last. He will be much missed in many circles.

MICHAEL SHARP